



water from four to ten feet in depth in slow to moderate current as the fish congregate in large schools. Females deposit 18,200 eggs that incubate for eight to 14 days.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

smallmouth buffalo

Ictiobus bubalus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Osteichthyes
Family: Cypriniformes
Order: Catostomidae

Features

The smallmouth buffalo has a bluish-gray back that blends into silvery blue sides, fading into white or yellowish on the belly. It has a humpbacked appearance with a small sub-terminal mouth. The dorsal fin is sickle-shaped with 26 to 31 fin rays. The maximum size of a smallmouth buffalo is around 40 pounds.

Natural History

The smallmouth buffalo prefers habitats in moderate to swift current with clear, deep stretches over sand, gravel, or a mixture of these with silt. It is most abundant in the border rivers and rare in large interior rivers and the natural lakes. It eats mostly aquatic insect larvae, attached algae, detritus, and zooplankton. It frequents sunken rip-rap structures and scour holes around wing dams. Often it is found in large schools along with bigmouth buffalo. Spawning occurs in spring. Fish mature in about the third year of life. Spawning activity occurs in shallow